

Australia and New Zealand in ANZUS and SEATO, Canada and Britain in NATO, Canada with the United States in NORAD, Pakistan in the Central Treaty Organization, Malaya in its defence relation with Britain, Australia and New Zealand -- these are examples of commitments that extend beyond the Commonwealth yet do not impair the continued allegiance of individual Commonwealth members to our association.

It should be recognized that African members are concerned with African aspirations, and it is important that membership in the Commonwealth should not create conflicts of interest.

With respect to certain countries such as India, Ceylon and the African nations, another important factor has come into play. Their response to the threat of Communism contrasts with that of the older members, and indeed with that of Pakistan and Malaya. Non-alignment in the Cold War lies at the root of the foreign policies of a strong and significant grouping of Commonwealth member nations.

The Commonwealth association is large enough in spirit and purpose, and elastic enough, to provide a framework for the association of nations, regardless of how they react to the Communist threat. It is only realistic to accept the fact that these differences in outlook have placed, and continue to place, a limit on the area of common ground which exists between the foreign and defence policies of Commonwealth nations.

Nevertheless, one fundamental principle is held in common -- the determination to prevent war. It is significant that, at the last meeting of Commonwealth prime ministers, agreement was reached on a statement of principles on disarmament. This was a measure of the common ground on which all the Commonwealth countries stand. It was a measure too of their common yearning for peace among the nations of the world.

Racial Challenge

Will the Commonwealth continue? In examining the continuing attributes of the Commonwealth the racial problem is a basic one. The Asian and African members have repeatedly underlined their view that the Commonwealth association cannot stand for less than full equality. Canada's position in support of that principle is clear and unequivocal. It is now a firm principle of the Commonwealth. Without it, the association in its present form is an impossibility.

In the efforts now being made to build inter-racial societies in African territories -- the Rhodesias, Kenya and Tanganyika -- the full observance of genuine equality for both the white and the non-white populations provides hope for the present and the future.

Racial equality is basic to the Commonwealth and must be maintained. In addition, there are other aspects of human rights for which the Commonwealth has traditionally stood -- freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom from acts of an arbitrary executive power.